

REMARKS

In the non-final Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1, 6, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,700,868 (Smith) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,551,836 (Parikh) and U.S. Patent No. 6,031,838 (Okabe); rejects claims 10, 12-15, and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith, Parikh, Okabe, and U.S. Patent No. 6,956,816 (Alexander); and rejects claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Smith, Parikh, Okabe, and U.S. Patent No. 6,765,907 (Xu). The rejections are respectfully traversed.¹

By this Amendment, Applicant amends claim 24 to improve form; cancels claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12-23, 25, and 26 without prejudice or disclaimer; and adds new claims 27-38. No new matter has been introduced. Claims 16-24 and 27-38 are pending.

Applicant appreciates the indication that claims 16-23 are allowed.

Claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12-23, 25, and 26 are canceled and the rejections thereof are therefore moot.

Claim 24 is amended to depend from claim 18 and is, therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claim 18 is allowable. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claim 24.

New independent claims 27, 34, and 38 recite features similar to (yet, possibly of different scope than) the features recited in claim 18 and are, therefore, allowable for at least reasons similar to reasons that claim 18 is allowable. Claims 28-33 and 35-37 variously depend

¹ As Applicant's remarks with respect to the Examiner's rejections overcome the rejections, Applicant's silence as to certain assertions by the Examiner in the Office Action or certain requirements that may be applicable to such rejections (e.g., whether a reference constitutes prior art, motivation to combine references, assertions as to dependent claims, etc.) is not a concession by Applicant that such assertions are accurate or that such requirements have been met, and Applicant reserves the right to dispute these assertions/requirements in the future.

from claims 27 and 34 and are therefore, allowable for at least the reasons that their base claims are allowable. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 27-38.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner's reconsideration of the application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

While the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, should the Examiner find some issue to remain unresolved, or should any new issues arise which could be eliminated through discussions with Applicant's representative, then the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone in order that the further prosecution of this application can thereby be expedited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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